

Chapter 3 The Quiet Family Years

Life for the royal family continued without any serious problems while Prince Charles and Princess Anne were growing up. Their mother was very busy with her official work, but she still made time for the family. In 1960 and 1964 she had two more children – Prince Andrew and Prince Edward.

The Queen often had to travel abroad, and Prince Philip often went with her. Their first big formal tour together was in 1953, just after Elizabeth became queen. In six months they travelled from Bermuda to Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia and Sri Lanka.

Elizabeth learned that it is not easy to please everybody. Sometimes people said, 'Why doesn't the Queen smile? She

looks so serious!' Elizabeth naturally looks like that, and it is very difficult to smile for hours during a royal visit. Nobody is perfect. Philip sometimes said exactly what was in his mind. This seemed quite rude, but he wasn't afraid to give his own opinions and many people liked this.

The children didn't usually travel with their parents on these early tours. But in 1953, at the end of the Commonwealth tour, Charles and Anne had a short trip on the first official journey of the new royal ship – the *Britannia*. This expensive and beautiful boat became a great favourite of the family over the years.

When the *Britannia* was built, the Queen took a great interest in it. She helped to choose the furniture, the colours for the paint, and everything for the family rooms. The ship was like a palace at sea. They could hold formal dances and parties on it, and they could welcome official guests. It was also comfortable, like a country house. The Queen and her family felt at home there. The children loved the little shop on the ship, and they put on sailors' clothes and helped to clean the floors. Later, after their wedding, Charles and Diana had a holiday on the *Britannia*.

The Queen made time for country life too. Charles, Anne, and later Andrew and Edward all grew up with horses and dogs, with fishing and shooting and other country sports. Every summer they spent time at Balmoral Castle, Queen Victoria's favourite home. Balmoral lies in wild Scottish country, by the River Dee. They could often visit Windsor Castle too, near London, and enjoy the beautiful parkland there with its old trees.

It was, in many ways, a very safe and happy life for Elizabeth's children. But they could never be exactly like ordinary children. In their early lives, Anne and Charles had nurses and private teachers, like the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret before them. On an ordinary day, the children saw their parents for only an hour or two. They often went to visit their mother in her sitting-room in the late afternoon, and then returned to their own

rooms for supper. Sometimes they didn't see her for months when she was away on tour.

Miss Lightbody, Charles's Scottish nurse, wanted him to be a little prince. She didn't like it when he got dirty. She taught him how to shake hands with visitors. Anne and Charles both learned how to be very polite. They often said 'please' to their own dogs!

Elizabeth and Philip finally decided to send them to school, with other children. So when he was nine, Charles went away to Cheam School. He lived there with other boys of his age and only came home in the holidays. Suddenly his life changed, and at first he was very unhappy. At home he was special, a prince. Here he was just one of many boys. He didn't have his nurse, or his parents, or his own comfortable rooms. Of course, other boys were unhappy because they were away from their parents. But life was very hard for Charles, because the world at Buckingham Palace was so different.

Later, he went on to Gordonstoun School in Scotland, his father's old school. Philip thought that it would be good for Charles. But Charles was shyer and quieter than his father. He didn't like the life there. The boys had no private time. The morning began with a run and a wash in cold water, and the day was full of exercise, lessons and jobs. It was like a school for young soldiers.

Charles wanted to leave Gordonstoun. He asked his grandmother, the Queen Mother, to help him. But she refused, and he had to stay. He learned to live there; he made a few friends, and tried to be like the other boys. Once, when they were out on a trip on the island of Lewis, Charles asked for a drink in a hotel bar. But he was too young, and was breaking the law. Charles was in trouble then, and the story got into the newspapers!

Then Charles spent a happy time away from Gordonstoun at an Australian school, Timbertop. He liked the country and the people. He was still 'different', but this was really because he was

British. The Australians made jokes about that, but Charles could laugh too and they all became good friends.

'Those years opened my eyes,' he said later.

After he came home, he took his final examinations at Gordonstoun and then went to Cambridge University. Some students were angry because Charles did not do very well in his school examinations. An 'ordinary' boy could not go to Cambridge with those results, they said.

As Charles arrived at Cambridge for the first time, someone in the crowd shouted out, 'Good luck!'

'I'll need it,' Charles replied.

But most people were glad that their future king was studying at university. Charles found time there to act in plays. He played music too.

Anne was a different kind of person. She was happy to go away to school, to Benenden in Kent. In her first week there, she went to a 'New Girls' party, and she quickly made friends. The school was very noisy after Buckingham Palace, but she soon learned to enjoy her new life. She could ride horses there, and she loved riding. She also sang, practised dancing, and made pots.

There was a favourite joke that the older girls played on new girls. 'Every new girl has to sing a song to the head teacher,' they said. 'Start practising now!' Most girls were very frightened, but Anne just said, 'OK – I'll try!'

Later, Princess Anne became a successful horse-rider, and she won cups at many important shows. She was even chosen to ride in the Olympic Games in 1976. Horses are very popular in the royal family. The Queen, Prince Philip and Charles all love riding. They also own race horses – one of the Queen Mother's greatest interests.

Anne also began to help a charity which offers horse-riding to children with special problems. And in 1973 she married Mark Phillips, another rider.



Princess Anne became a successful horse-rider.

'Perhaps their children will have four legs!' joked the Queen.

Andrew and Edward were much younger than Charles and Anne, and their lives were less public. Andrew went into the navy like his father. He was a fun-loving young man, and he enjoyed his time at Gordonstoun school more than Charles. He liked to play terrible jokes; once he threw some red paint at American reporters! He grew tall and handsome, and he quickly became interested in girls. This gave the newspapers a few good stories. At one time he was very friendly with a woman who acted in sex films.

Edward, like Charles, also went to Cambridge University, and he studied history. He tried the life of a soldier too, but he didn't like it. He preferred the theatre, and he has worked in theatre and in television. He is polite and quiet, and he keeps his life private.



In the 1960s, life in Britain changed suddenly. There were new clothes, new pop music, new ideas. Young people had long hair and talked openly about sex. To many of them, the royal family seemed boring. In a new, exciting Britain, who wanted all that old history?

The Queen decided that she had to make some changes. She wanted to 'open a window' on to the royal family. In 1969, television cameras came into the royal home and filmed the family in private for the first time. Forty million people watched the programme. They saw a different side of the royal family. Even the Queen, a very formal lady, was laughing and talking quite naturally in the film. This programme brought the royal family closer to the people, but it also helped to make problems for the future. Now the public wanted to see more and more of royal private life. It was harder to keep the reporters out.

The royal family were less safe in a changing world, too. In 1969, Prince Charles became Prince of Wales. Not everyone in

Wales wanted a prince from London, and some bombs went off around that time. Luckily nothing happened during the ceremony. Then, in 1974, a man with a gun stopped Anne's car in the centre of London and tried to take her away. He shot at her detective, her driver, a policeman and a reporter, hurting them all. And one morning in 1982, the Queen woke up and found a man in her bedroom. Michael Fagan sat down on the bed and asked her for a cigarette. The Queen talked to him quietly, and tried to get help. Nobody came. At last she was able to get him out of the room, and the police took him away.

Nobody was hurt – but it was very dangerous. How did the man get into the Palace? Why didn't the guards come more quickly? The Palace was 'open to the public' in another way on that day, and in future the royal family needed to be much more careful.